



May/June 2026

## The Educator

A Newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

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### Message from the NLFSC President



As another successful school year comes to a close, I would like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation to all School Councils across the province for your dedication, volunteerism, and ongoing commitment to supporting students, families, and school communities.

Your efforts throughout the year have made a meaningful difference. School Councils play an important role in creating positive and

supportive learning environments, and your contributions are truly valued.

I would also like to recognize and thank school administrators, teachers, and all school personnel for their hard work, professionalism, and care shown to students each and every day. The success of our schools is built on the dedication of so many individuals working together with a shared commitment to student learning and well-being.

As we look ahead, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) will continue to meet and work collaboratively with the Minister of Education and the Department of Education to ensure the voices of School Councils and families continue

to be heard and represented in matters affecting education throughout our province. During the summer months, I will also be meeting with the Minister of Education to help ensure the new School Council Handbook is finalized and ready for councils when schools reopen in the fall.

To everyone who has given their time, energy, and support throughout the year, thank you for helping make our schools welcoming, caring, and successful places for students to learn and grow.

Wishing you all a safe, restful, and enjoyable summer.

*Sincerely,*

Don

*Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca*

### **Teacher/Staff Allocations**

By now, school administrators will have received their teacher and school staff allocations for the 2026-27 school year. School councils are encouraged to inquire about these allocations and whether or not there will

be any potential impacts on students and school programming.

As part of their advisory role, school councils play an important part in fostering transparency, and informed communication within the school community. Asking questions and seeking clarity about staffing and resources is both appropriate and encouraged



As the school year comes to a close, NLFSC would like to recognize and celebrate our graduating students for their hard work, growth, and achievements. Graduation is more than a milestone—it is a reflection of years of learning, perseverance, friendships, challenges, and personal development.

Our students have shown dedication both inside and outside the classroom, and NLFSC is proud of all they have accomplished.

NLFSC also recognizes the important role of families, caregivers, teachers, school staff, and

the wider community in supporting each student along the way. Your encouragement, guidance, and commitment have made a lasting impact.

This year's graduates leave us with a strong foundation for the future. Whether they are continuing their education, entering the workforce, or exploring new opportunities, we are confident they are well prepared for the next chapter of their journey. Their future is full of possibilities.

Congratulations to our 2025-26 graduates, your journey is just beginning, and we look forward to seeing all that you will achieve.



As another school year comes to a close, summer provides families with a well-deserved opportunity to relax, recharge, and enjoy quality

time together. It is also an important time to help keep young minds active through reading.

Research consistently shows that students who continue reading throughout the summer are better prepared when school begins again in the fall. Even just 15–20 minutes of reading each day can help children maintain and strengthen literacy skills, expand vocabulary, improve comprehension, and build confidence.

Summer reading does not need to feel like homework. Children can explore books, magazines, comics, sports articles, recipes, or audiobooks — anything that captures their interest and encourages curiosity.

The key is helping students discover stories and topics they genuinely enjoy. Visits to the library, reading together before bedtime, or setting aside quiet family reading time can make reading a fun and meaningful part of everyday summer life.

Parents and caregivers play a powerful role in fostering a love of reading. When children see adults reading, talking about books, and making reading a priority, they are more

likely to develop strong, lifelong reading habits themselves.

Reading supports far more than academic success. It sparks imagination, strengthens communication skills, encourages creativity and curiosity, and helps children better understand the world around them.

This summer, let's continue working together to support every child's learning journey through the joy of reading. A single book can inspire imagination, open doors to new ideas and adventures, and create opportunities that can last a lifetime — one page at a time.

## **Bicycle Safety in Newfoundland and Labrador**



As warmer weather arrives and school and after-school activities resume, more children,

youth, and adults are enjoying cycling and e-biking across Newfoundland and Labrador the RCMP is reminding all cyclists and e-bike riders that safety is everyone's responsibility.

Whether riding to school, commuting to activities, exploring neighbourhoods, or enjoying local trails, cyclists should make safety a top priority. In Newfoundland and Labrador, all bicycle and e-bike riders, regardless of age, are required by law to wear an approved helmet. Properly fitted helmets can reduce the risk of serious head or brain injury by up to 80%. Operating a bicycle or e-bike without a helmet is a ticketable offence and may result in a fine of up to \$180.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to review bicycle safety rules with children before they head out for the season. Cyclists and e-bike riders have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles and must obey all laws outlined in the Highway Traffic Act.

To help prevent injuries and keep roads safe, RCMP Newfoundland and Labrador encourages cyclists and e-bike operators to:

- Always wear an approved helmet.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Ride on the right side of the road and travel in

the same direction as traffic.

- Avoid riding bicycles or e-bikes on sidewalks.
- Use proper hand signals when turning or stopping.
- Stay alert and avoid distractions such as headphones or mobile devices.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing, especially during evenings or low visibility.
- Use a front white light and rear red light or reflector when riding between one half-hour before sunset and one half-hour after sunrise.
- Ensure bicycles have at least one functioning brake capable of stopping the bicycle.
- Remain at the scene of any collision and provide identification to police when required. Failure to do so may result in fines or arrest.

E-bike owners must also follow applicable federal legislation. E-bike motors cannot exceed 500 watts and must have a maximum speed of 32 km/h. E-bikes are also required to have fully operable pedals, meaning the motor disengages when the rider stops pedaling.

Motorists also play an important role in keeping roads safe by watching carefully for cyclists, slowing down in residential areas, and giving riders enough space when passing.

Cycling and e-biking are healthy, enjoyable,

and environmentally friendly activities that help children build confidence and independence while encouraging active living for all ages. By working together and practicing safe habits, we can help ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable biking season in Newfoundland and Labrador.



June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada — a day for all Canadians to recognize and celebrate the rich heritage, diverse cultures, languages, and important contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

Chosen to coincide with the summer solstice, June 21 is the longest day of the year and a time when many Indigenous communities have traditionally gathered to celebrate their cultures, traditions, and connection to the land.

For many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, the summer solstice holds deep

spiritual and cultural significance, representing renewal, reflection, and community.

The Canadian Constitution recognizes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. While these groups share some common experiences, each has its own unique histories, languages, cultural practices, traditions, and spiritual beliefs.

In cooperation with Indigenous organizations, the Government of Canada selected June 21 as National Indigenous Peoples Day to honour and celebrate the enduring strength, knowledge, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples across the country.

June is also recognized as National Indigenous History Month in Canada - a time to learn about and celebrate the unique cultures, traditions, histories, and experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

The month provides us with an opportunity to recognize and honour the stories, achievements and resilience of Indigenous Peoples, who have lived on this land since time immemorial and whose contributions continue to shape and strengthen Canada.



### **School Holiday Schedule 2026-27**

- September 7 - Labour Day
- September 8 - Administration Day
- September 9 - School Reopens/Students
- September 30 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation\*
- October 12 - Thanksgiving Day
- November 11 - Remembrance Day
- December 22 - Last Day - Christmas
- January 4 - School Reopens
- March 25 - Last Day - Easter
- April 5 - School Reopens
- May 24 - Victoria Day
- June 24 - Last Day - Summer
- June 25 - Administration Day



## 2026 Distinguished Principal of the Year



### Provincial Budget Highlights Impacting Education

#### K-12 Education

- Almost \$625 million for educators, teaching and learning assistants. This is a \$29 million increase to enable the addition of 94 teachers and 20 teaching and learning assistants.
- Close to \$20 million to provide education supports to Indigenous children.
- \$1 million to place social workers in schools as part of a provincial expansion to the Doorways Program to support the mental health of students.
- To help ensure a safe environment for children and staff in every school, \$500,000 is being provided for new automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and for additional first aid training for educational staff.

Congratulations to Andrea Clarke, Principal of St. Augustine’s Elementary School on Bell Island for winning the Distinguished Principal of the Year Award, presented by the Canadian Association of Principals.

Known affectionately by her students as “Mrs. ABC,” Andrea is admired for her caring leadership, dedication to student success, and strong belief that meaningful relationships are the foundation of learning. Since becoming principal in 2022, she has created a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environment where students feel supported, valued, and empowered to succeed both academically and personally. Deeply connected to the Bell Island community she proudly calls home. Andrea continues to make a lasting impact through her compassion, commitment, and passion for education.

## **Mandatory School Bus Regulations**

The provincial government is bringing in mandatory registration for K–12 school bus service as part of a broader push to improve and modernize student transportation across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Right now, families don't have to register for busing, which can make it difficult to know exactly how many students will actually use the service. Officials say the new system will help the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure better plan routes, assign seating, and make sure buses are being used where they're needed most.

One of the biggest changes for families will be having bus routes finalized before the school year starts — including approved alternate stops like daycares and child care locations. This means parents will have confirmed transportation details earlier and won't be dealing with as many last-minute changes in September.

No eligible student will lose access to a seat

because of the new process. The goal is to make the system more reliable and efficient while improving service for students and families.

The changes are also expected to cut down on the amount of time schools spend dealing with transportation issues, allowing administrators and staff to focus more on students and learning.

Over time, families can also expect new technology and transportation updates, including real-time bus tracking, alerts, notifications, and updates when students get on and off the bus.

The mandatory registration system will roll out gradually over three years, starting in September 2026 with 17 schools taking part in the first phase.

The province also plans to launch a public survey on possible changes to school start and end times. Officials say staggered schedules could help improve efficiency, reduce the number of buses needed, and ease traffic during busy drop-off and pick-up times.

## **Supporting Student Mental Health and Wellness During the Summer**

Summer can be an exciting and relaxing time for students, but it can also bring changes in routine, increased screen time, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, or stress for some children and youth. Supporting mental health and wellness during the summer months is just as important as supporting physical health.

Parents, caregivers, and communities can help students maintain positive mental wellness by encouraging healthy routines, open communication, and meaningful connections throughout the summer.

### **Tips to Support Student Mental Wellness This Summer**

- **Maintain a Routine:**

While summer schedules may be more flexible, having regular sleep, meal, and

- activity times helps children and youth feel secure and balanced.

- **Encourage Outdoor Activity:**

Fresh air, exercise, and time in nature can improve mood, reduce stress, and support overall well-being.

- **Limit Excessive Screen Time:**

Encourage a healthy balance between technology use and offline activities such as reading, sports, crafts, or spending time with family and friends.

- **Stay Connected:**

Social connection is important for mental health. Encourage children and youth to spend time with supportive friends, relatives, teammates, or community groups.

- **Create Opportunities to Talk:**

Make time for regular conversations and check-ins. Listening without judgment helps children feel safe sharing their feelings and concerns.

- **Promote Rest and Relaxation:**

Summer should include time to

- recharge. Quiet activities, hobbies, and downtime are important for emotional well-being.

- **Watch for Signs of Struggle:**

Changes in mood, sleep, appetite, energy levels, or social withdrawal may indicate a child or youth needs extra support.

## Helping Children Build Resilience

Summer is also a great time to help students build confidence and resilience by:

- Trying new activities or hobbies
- Volunteering in the community
- Setting small goals
- Practicing problem-solving and independence
- Celebrating effort and progress, not just achievement
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## When Additional Support Is Needed

If a child or youth is struggling emotionally, families are encouraged to seek support early. Talking to a trusted adult, healthcare provider, or mental health professional can make a meaningful difference.

Mental health is an important part of overall wellness. By working together to support healthy habits, positive relationships, and open communication, we can help students return to school in the fall feeling supported, confident, and ready to learn.



Newfoundland and Labrador  
Federation of School Councils

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